

S. A. Hall

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CALUMNY *Delinented.*

IN A
S E R M O N

Preach'd at

Great **YARMOUTH,**

FROM

LEVITICUS XIX. 16.

By **RICHARD FROST.**



L O N D O N,

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LEVIT. XIX. 16.

*Thou shalt not go up and down as
a Tale-bearer among thy Peo-
ple : Neither shalt thou stand
against the Blood of thy
Neighbour : I am the Lord.*

IT is no small Commendation
of our Holy Religion, that it
doth not only lay down gene-
ral Rules for regulating the
Purposes of our Hearts, the
Words of our Lips, and the Actions of our
Lives,* but descends to Particulars under
each of these, and cautions us against every
Thing which would render us displeasing to
God, or injurious to our Neighbour. A-
mongst those Things which are so in an
high Degree, the Vice, which my Text leads
me to treat of, must be ranked.

It seems there were some, even in those antient Times, who had an Itch for Detraction and Calumny; and therefore God saw fit, by an exprefs Law, to provide against it. Yea, we may run up its Pedigree much higher; it is the genuine Off-spring of the Accuser of the Brethren; and when he got footing in our World, by the primitive Apostasy, it came in with him: And 'tis amazing to think, with what speed it spread it self over the whole habitable World! Tho' there is no hope of totally eradicating this Vice, which is so deeply rooted in the Minds of Men, and so great a Favourite of the evil Spirit; yet as the Son of God came to destroy the Works of the Devil, and the Ministers of the blessed Gospel are from Age to Age to carry on the same glorious Design, I resolve, in an humble Dependence upon the Assistance of the Spirit, and Grace of the Redeemer, to do my utmost in order thereto. The Word (*Ráukjil*) we translate a *Tale-bearer*, is derived from (*Rókeel*) a Root, which primarily signifies a Merchant or Tradesman; because the Detractor exposes to Sale the Reputation and Honour of his Neighbour. *Ezek. xxii. 9. In thee are Men that carry Tales to shed Blood:* Or, according to the Margin, *In thee are Men of Slanders.*

What

What Calumny and Detraction is, you are all pretty well acquainted. It is publishing a Falsity which tends to the Reproach and Disparagement of another; or, tho' the Accusation be true, speaking it without any weighty Reason. O! that it was as easy to cure this Distemper, as it is to describe it.

In treating upon this Vice, I purpose, with Divine Assistance,

First, To consider it in its Source.

Secondly, Represent to you the unhappy Consequences of *Tale-bearing* and *Calumny*.

Thirdly, Endeavour to prescribe proper Remedies for checking this Infection, which is so rife amongst us.

Fourthly, I shall address my self to those who are Sufferers by this Vice.

And *Lastly*, Close the Discourse with a practical Inference or two.

First then, I am to consider it in its Source.

1. This Vice often springs from a mean, abject Spirit. A Person whose natural Abilities are of a groveling Size, and who hath taken no Pains to be Master of acquired ones, knows not how to bear his Part in Company; neither understanding Religion,
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Politicks, the Liberal Arts, or, the *Belles Lettres*, the polite Ones, the Conversation grows flat and insipid; he therefore endeavours to supply this Chasm by a Detail of his Neighbour's Imperfections. He looks upon his being long in Company, and having nothing to say, as what will expose him to Ridicule; and rather than be thought himself ridiculous, he endeavours to make his Neighbour so.

2. From Envy. This unreasonable Passion turns the Happiness of another into a Man's own Torment. If I am haunted by this Fury, I shall esteem the high Reputation my Neighbour hath gained as eclipsing my own; the Figure he makes in the World to be the Reason I am so little taken Notice of. This will make me cherish every malicious Whisper, every Suspicion, upon whatever trifling Foundation built, to lessen his Character, and present him to the World in a disadvantageous Light. The envious Man hath his Bow bent, and his Arrow ready on the String, that he may privately wound his innocent Neighbour, who dwells securely by him. The wise Man observes, *That Wrath is cruel, and Anger outrageous, but who is able to stand before Envy?* Wrath and Anger are transient Acts, though the Gust may blow strong, it is soon over; but Envy is a settled

fettled Habit, and is more irritated by Time.

3. A Sense of Mens Guilt in general, and even of those particular Crimes they charge on others, is another Source of this back-biting, calumniating Spirit. One would think indeed, that of all Persons, those should for their own sake, be the tenderest of the Reputation of others, but Experience shows us the contrary. The guilty Wretch is afraid that the Faults he is conscious of should be exposed in broad Day, and therefore seeks to throw a Veil over them, by turning the Regard of the Person he converses with from himself to some other Object. These People think, that if by bespattering their Neighbours they can make them as black as themselves, their own Deformity will not be so visible.

4. This Vice is sometimes owing to an impertinent Curiosity. Where this is the Spring, I cannot say they are equally guilty with the two last named Classes; but even they are highly culpable. The former stab a Man with Malice prepenſe, these by a kind of Chance-Medley: But whether by the one, or the other, the poor Man is stabbed; the Consequence is the same as to him; his good Name and Reputation, which are equally dear to him with Life it self, and perhaps much dearer, are lost, irrecoverably

ably lost. An Itch after forbidden Knowledge we derive from our first Parents, and if we indulge it, it will render us uneasy to our selves, make us run into a thousand Things we had better be ignorant of; and when we have pick'd up all the little Slips and Miscarriages of our Neighbours, our Bellies will be like full Bottles, ready to burst, till we have vented them to the first Person we meet. These are your Busy-bodies, who either having nothing to do, or through an Unsteadiness of Temper, not being willing to settle to their own Affairs, are ever upon the Wing, fluttering from Visit to Visit, treasuring up Scandal in the Conversation of one Family, to gabble over in the next. *St. Paul*, who was well apprized of the infinite Damage such Persons do to Society, and the Reproach they bring upon Christianity, severely taxes some, as Wanderers from House to House, *and not only Idle, but Tatlers also, and Busy-Bodies, speaking Things which they ought not*^a. The Character of the Busy-Body is thus drawn in Miniature by an able Hand. He is one who labours without Thanks, talks without Credit, lives without Love, and dies without Pity, save, that some say, it was pity he died no sooner. To one or other

^a 1 Tim. v. 13.

of these four Particulars this detestable Vice of Calumny is generally owing.

Secondly, I am to represent to you, the unhappy Consequences of Tale-bearing and Calumny. Now these concern either the Persons whom we defame, or those to whom we communicate the Slander, or our selves. As to the Person whom we defame, there is a great deal of Baseness and Cowardice in the Action, which alone, methinks, should make it abhorred by a generous Mind. 'Tis a sign we are ashamed or afraid to support the Charge against him to his Face, and therefore watch for an Opportunity of wounding him in the dark. Perhaps the Scandal we fasten upon his Character in our Visit, may not entirely be wiped off all his Life after, since no sooner is the Reproach uttered, but there are a thousand Ecchoes ready to publish it, and those Persons who repeat it will be too apt to put in some unkind, additional Circumstance; so liberal are Mankind in Matters of Scandal and Defamation.

'Tis a great Grief to the Person defamed, and if of a weak and tender Spirit, may cause him to pine away in anguish, and be ready to loath his very Being. *The Words of a Tale-bearer are as Wounds, and they*

go down into the innermost Parts of the Belly^b (whose Wounds are of the most dangerous Consequence.) The depriving a Man of his Reputation, Estate, yea, sometimes of Life it self, is the fatal Result of malicious Slanders. When the Prophet is giving us a Catalogue of the crying Sins of *Jerusalem*, this is one, *In thee are Men that carry Tales to shed Blood^c*. Thus in the Verse where my Text is, *Neither shalt thou stand against the Blood of thy Neighbour: I am the Lord*. Intimating, that the one led to the other; from being a Retailer in Slander and Calumny, a Person might in Time be drawn to bear false Witness against his innocent Neighbour in a Court of Judicature. Sometimes the Person thus scandalized by us, is one to whom we are indebted for many friendly and kind Offices; in that Case, the Guilt we contract by these ill-natur'd Stories rises much higher. *A Whisperer separateth chief Friends^d*. And in the Ninth Verse of the following Chapter, *He that covereth a Transgression procureth Love, but he that repeateth a Matter separateth very Friends*.

^b Prov. xviii. 8.

^c Ezek. xxii. 9.

^d Prov. xvi. 28.

As to those to whom we communicate the Slander, it is either an Abuse of their easy and credulous Temper, or the Cherishing a vicious Pleasure we perceive they are apt to take in it. 'Tis surprizing to think, with what Satisfaction some Persons will set three or four Hours in Company, when almost all the Discourse turns upon the real or imaginary Follies or Vices of their Neighbours; each, in his Turn, bearing his Part, and so the Scandal goes round the Circle.

In the third Place, be pleased to turn your Eyes upon the Tale-bearer himself, and let us see what his Gains are; truly such as no thinking Person would be ambitious of. For, 1. Among the more judicious and penetrating Part of Mankind, the Tale-bearer, while he is intentionally publishing the Faults of others, is really publishing his own: They will be shy of such a Person's Company, knowing that the same Temper which leads him to blacken others, will, as soon as an Opportunity offers, prompt him to blacken them also.

Moreover, 2. What sad Work are such making for a bitter Repentance? They may depend upon it, if ever they are brought to a just Sense of their Duty, the Remembrance of these Things will lay heavy on their

12 *Calumny Delineated.*

Consciences : How light soever any may now make of it, and at all Adventures heap Calumny and Slander upon their Neighbour's Head, yet sure I am, these very Persons are by the Apostle inserted in the black List. *If any Man that is called a Brother be a Fornicator, or Covetous, or an Idolater, or a Railer, with such an one keep not Company.* And in the following Chapter, ver. 9, and 10. *Be not deceived, neither Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, shall inherit the Kingdom of God.* You see, Sirs, if you will stand by the Judgment of God, in what Class Railers and Revilers are ranked. But the Unhappiness of it is, we often judge of Vice and Virtue, not according to the Ideas the Gospel of Truth gives us, but according to those of the World. How melancholy must the Reflections of such a Sinner be, when Conscience doth its Office? "Wretch that I have been, what a
 " Loose have I given my Tongue in Calum-
 " niating and Defaming others? How ma-
 " ny false Reports have I been the Author
 " of? and, How many Men the unhappy
 " Publishers of? How have I been tickled
 " and pleased in hearing the Miscarriages
 " of others reaped up, and beyond Measure

^c 1 Cor. v. 11.

" aggra-

“ aggravated? O, the Injury! the irreparable Injury, I may have been guilty of, with regard to many! And in injuring them, how have I affronted my God, whose Authority I have trampled upon, by acting this vile Part! And as to my self, where is the Satisfaction and Peace of my own Breast?

Far be it from me to accuse any particular Persons; but if Conscience whispers to any, I am the Man, or I the Woman, take the Hint, cherish the Conviction, and humble your self deeply before God for it. To speak freely, I fear we are most of us verily guilty in this Matter; though not, God be thanked, in the same notorious Degree. Who is there among us who hath no Reason to charge himself with the Guilt of Tale-bearing? Lord, pardon thy Servants in this Matter, and wherein we have done amiss, by thy Grace enable us to do so no more.

3. If there be any of us whom the divine Displeasure and Sense of Duty will not move, let us see whether an Argument drawn from their present Interest will. 'Tis this: None are so apt to feel the Weight of Tale-bearing and Scandal as themselves, as they who have been most forward to load their Neighbours therewith. Can we forget
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(I heartily wish our Practice shew'd we remember'd it more) that Saying of our Lord, *With what Measure ye meet, it shall be measured to you again*^f? And how do you think you would like a Return in the same Kind? How deeply have you resented the Scandals and Reproaches others have cast upon you? What a secret Uneasiness have you felt in your Breast, though you might be conscious, in that particular Instance, you were not guilty? for though we are often sure, that the Censures pass'd upon us are uttered by those who know nothing of us, and have neither Means nor Abilities to form a right Judgment concerning us; yet we can scarce forbear being grieved at what they say. But notwithstanding your Resentment of such Usage, if you remain a notorious Dealer in this Vice, expect to bear all the Load, unassisted, unpitied; since nothing is more just than that he who *made a Pit, and digged it*, should fall *into the Ditch that he made*^g. Methinks what hath been already offered, should be sufficient to deter us from a Vice pregnant with such fatal Consequences; but as the Disease is become so

^f Matt. vii. 2.

^g Psal. vii. 15.

epidemic, and hath taken such deep Root among us, be pleas'd further to consider these two Things.

(1.) That the allowed Practice, or the carrying on the Trade of Tale-bearing (alluding to the Import of the original Word in our Text) is a vile Perversion of the noble End for which the Powers of Speech are afforded us. Our Tongue is, by the Psalmist, stiled *Our Glory*; when we use it in praising God, and benefiting our Neighbour, it is so indeed; when we use it as holy *Job* did his; *When the Ear heard me, then it blessed me*^h: To speak a Word in Season to the drooping Spirit; to counsel those in their Affairs who are lost in a Maze of Perplexity; to brighten up the Character of a good Man that is sullied; this is to employ it aright; thus it will turn to a Testimony for us. Upon the very Mention of these Things, how lovely do they appear? and consequently, how odious must that Vice be which is directly opposite thereto? As to the Tongue of the common Tale-bearer, it is like the Tail of *Sampson's* Foxes; it carries Firebrands along with it where-ever it goes, and is enough to set the Field of the World in a Flameⁱ.

^h Job xxix. 11.

ⁱ Judges xv. 4, 5.

(2.) The indulged Practice of this pernicious Vice is contrary both to the Practice and Precepts of the blessed Jesus : He hath taught us to pray, *Forgive us our Trespases, as we forgive those who trespass against us.* But if we are ready to set a-broach the trifling Affronts and Injuries that have been offer'd us, where-ever we come ; nay, which is still worse, make Proclamation of, and highly aggravate the least Slips our Neighbour hath been guilty of, though they no way concern our selves ; is this to forgive their Trespases ? Would to God, the Sons of Wrath and Passion would consider what they do, when they pray over, or pretend to do so, this Petition in our Lord's Prayer. *Love is the fulfilling of the Law of Christ :* The Precepts he hath given us ; the Doctrine he hath taught us ; the blessed Sacrament he hath instituted ; the shining Example he hath set us ; and, in a Word, the whole Gospel breathes Love and Friendship. But what is more inconsistent with Charity, than Calumny and Backbiting ? And consequently, who less deserves the Name of a Christian than the Tale-bearer ? From what has been hitherto said, we may all discern sufficient Reason for enacting such a Law as this in our Text ; *Thou shalt not go up and down as a Tale-bearer among thy*
Peo-

People. I proceed now to the third Head propos'd, viz.

Thirdly, To prescribe proper Remedies for checking this dangerous Infection, which is so rife among us.

1. Let me beg of you (and I would take the same Advice my self I give to others) frequently to inspect the Frame and Temper of your own Heart, and the Conduct of your own Life. O how much, and how important Work would this cut out for us! Were this one Direction conscientiously practised, we should then have very little Time, and less Inclination, to espy and publish the Faults of others. Those who are notoriously guilty of the Vice I have been exposing, have Cause to suspect that they are Strangers at home.

2. Which is a Consequence of the former; pity the Faults of others; pray for them, and throw the Mantle of Love over them. If we know our own Blemishes and Miscarriages, this will lead us to sympathize with others, to bear one anothers Burden, and so fulfil the Law of Christ: And when once we are touch'd with a commiserating Sense of their Condition, this will express it self, by offering up to Almighty God, our hearty Prayers for them, That
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18. *Calumny Delineated.*

he would pardon their Follies, and by his Spirit, graciously assist to conquer and subdue them. Where-ever this blessed Frame of Soul hath the Ascendant, such, if consistently with their Duty, they can hide the Faults of others, they will do it. *Love covereth all Sins^k. And above all Things have fervent Charity among your selves; for Charity shall cover the Multitude of Sins^l.* Charity covers a Multitude of Faults in another; therefore, to be sure, is very far from imputing any to him, he is wholly innocent of.

3. If in Conversation the Tide runs strong against a particular Person, labour to turn it; if you know any good of him, speak that; if you are silent, let your Actions speak for you, that you are far from taking Pleasure in such Discourse. When in Conversation the whole Company are, with full Cry, pursuing some absent Friend or Acquaintance, to appear openly to vindicate him, may, perhaps, be to expose your self to be worried; but try whether you cannot, by Degrees, turn the Discourse to another Subject; and when they begin to cool, if you are able, in a few Instances, to

^k Prov. x. 12.
^l 1 Pet. iv. 8.

shew the Falsity or great Improbability of what was laid to his Charge, you will go a good Way to brighten his sullied Reputation, and remove the unhappy Impressions the Company have imbibed to his Disadvantage: But if Matters are so circumstanced (as 'tis to be expected they sometimes will) that Silence appears the more prudent Part, then let your Actions speak for you. 'Tis with amazing Swift-ness and Force we communicate our Sentiments of Things by our Actions: These are a kind of universal Language; a Turn of the Head, a more than ordinary Gravity of Countenance, a Contraction of the Brow, discover our Dislike and Uneasiness; and if the Company have any Value for us, they will drop that Discourse, which seems so much to displease us, and assume some other Subject: If they still continue it, take the first Opportunity of quitting the Company; and be sure to make none your Bosom Friends, who are notoriously guilty of this detestable Vice. You will, perhaps, say, Should we thus act, how considerably must we lessen the Number of our Acquaintance? I own, that as Matters now stand, this is like to be the Case of many; but be it so; Is it not better to drop the Acquaintance of those, from whose Conversation

you can receive but little Benefit, and are in the utmost Danger of receiving a great deal of Hurt? *He that walketh with wise Men shall be wise; but a Companion of Fools shall be destroy'd^m.* And that the Tale-bearer and Slanderer deserve that Name, the former Part of this Discourse hath (I think) sufficiently evinced.

4. Earnestly beg of God to set a Watch over the Door of your Lips. If this be our weak Side, that our Tongue, impatient of Restraint, is apt to break all due Bounds; let us beg of God to set it right, and keep it so: *Set a Watch, O Lord, before my Mouth; keep the Door of my Lipsⁿ.* And in another Place: *O Lord, open thou my Lips, and my Mouth shall shew forth thy Praise.*

5. As I observed under the first Head, that the Want of proper Materials for Discourse, was one Source of this Vice: Take care to furnish your selves with such. I hope there is enough to talk of in your friendly Visits, without prying into the Affairs of Families, and picking up and divulging all the ill-natured Stories a fertile Imagination, and malicious Temper can

^m Prov. xiii. 20.

ⁿ Psalm cxli. 3.

suggest. The Employment of the Scavenger is not half so despicable, so mean as this, even bating the Sin of it. Were Scandal and Obliquy once discarded, it might be hoped, that religious Subjects would find some Place in the Conversation, which, if prudently managed, would be of the highest Advantage, and turn to the best Account. I was going to descend to some Particulars, for filling up the Time on these Occasions—— but I restrain my self; the mentioning them might, in the Opinion of some, sink below the Dignity of the Place wherein I stand. I hasten therefore to the last general Head,

Fourthly, To address my self to those who are Sufferers by this Vice; and in so numerous an Auditory^o, I doubt not, but there are many such.

First then. Whenever you hear any Thing hath been reported concerning you, to lessen your Character, examine whether you are guilty of the Charge or not: If guilty, take Care, by your future Deportment, to give no Occasion for a Renewal of this Accusation. If you stand clear, comfort your self with the Testimony of

^o Consisting of about a Thousand Hearers.

your

your own Conscience. For this, we are obliged to our very Enemies, that we may oftner learn our weak Side from them, than from our Friends: Either they do not see our Faults, or conceal them from us, or soften them by partial Representations. An Adversary, on the contrary, by a nice Search, discovers every Flaw and Imperfection in our Temper and Conduct: And though his Malice may set them in too strong a Light; yet he hath often some Ground for what he advances. Try your self therefore impartially; here is such a Report whisper'd about the Town concerning me, Whence should it arise? What Occasion have I given for it? If you closely pursue the Inquiry, perhaps, you may trace it to its Spring; it arose from some false Step or other in your Conduct; though the Thing hath been beyond Measure aggravated. But if, upon Search, you find your self wholly innocent, let the Verdict Conscience brings in your Favour, administer a perpetual Feast. Doubt not but, though the Clouds are at present gathered, and look black upon you, they will shortly blow over, and your Character will only stand the firmer, for the Assault made upon it. Let not the groundless Insinuations of the Tale-bearer deprive you of one
Night's

Night's Rest, or break in upon the Composure of your Mind. To maintain this desirable Evenness of Spirit under Reproach, consider,

Secondly, Though it be your Unhappiness to be Calumniated, it is not your Sin. It must be owned, that upon Persons of noble and generous Minds it grates very hard; but let such reflect upon the Reproaches the Son of God, the blessed Author of our holy Religion, underwent: How calm and unmoved was his Deportment all the while! He was stigmatized as a Friend to Publicans and Sinners; a Confederate with wicked Spirits: *This Man*, say they, *casteth out Devils, by Belzebub, the Prince of Devils*. Thus the holy Jesus, though he knew no Sin, and was perfectly clear from any Guilt, yet was loudly clamour'd against as guilty of the most flagrant Wickedness. He suffered the Contradiction of Sinners; and this was no small Part of his Humiliation. This likewise is a Part of that Cross we are to bear, in Conformity to our Lord; but the Sin of it lies at the Door of the Slanderer, it is he is like to be the greatest Sufferer by it in the end. Discover then a Temper worthy a Christian; be more concerned for the Guilt contracted by the chief Authors of the Calumny, and the Dishonour that may
be

be done to the blessed God by it, than for any Inconveniencies arising to your self from it. While you maintain this Temper of Soul, you have ground to hope that God will fulfil that gracious Promise to you, *Then shall your Light rise out of Obscurity, and your Darknes be turned into Noon-day*^p.

Thirdly, Take care to live down the Scandal. Be eminent for the contrary Grace to that Vice with which you are aspersed. It was an Answer worthy the Philosopher, which *Plato* returned, when told, that some Persons had spoke Evil of him, No Matter (saith he) I'll take care to live so, as that no body shall believe them. The particular Duty which at such a Time Providence calls for, is that which stands directly opposed to the Fault Men unjustly accuse us of.

I shall now conclude with an Inference or two.

Infer. 1. From what hath been said, let us all take heed of caressing this odious Tribe of Tale-bearers. The Apostle speaks of some, who not liking to retain God in their Knowledge, were given up by him to a reprobate Mind, and were full of Deceit, Maliginity, *Whisperers, Backbiters, Haters*

^p Isa. lviii. 10.

of God^a: And there is a greater Connection than Men are generally aware of between those three Characters. How can he love God who hates his Brother? The Tale-bearer is a Pest to Society, an Abuser of the Confidence others repose in him, by giving them an ill Opinion of their Neighbours: His destructive Whisper blights like an easterly Wind, and withers every ones Reputation it breathes upon. Such convey the Scandal they are desirous of spreading, under the Notion of a mighty Secret, and whisper that in your Ear to Day, you may hear proclaimed on the House-top to Morrow. As therefore you value either the Peace of your own Conscience, or the Welfare of your Neighbours, contract no Familiarity with such Persons.

Infer. 2. What Reason have those of us to bless God, who have been in a great Measure hid from the Scourge of the Tongue. If the Wrath of Men hath been restrained from breaking out, so as to disturb our Peace, and blemish our Reputation, let us give God the Glory. This is the best Method to preserve our good Name. If we honour God he will honour us; will *hide us in the Secret of his Presence, from the Pride of Men, and*

^a Rom. i. 29, 30.

guard us in a Pavilion, from the Strife of Tongues^r. Neither the Innocence of the Dove, though join'd with the Prudence of the Serpent, is sufficient entirely to secure us from unjust Censures and false Accusations. If we enjoy the Happiness of an unblemish'd, and universal good Character, 'tis to that commanding Influence Almighty God hath over the Hearts and Tongues of Men, we are indebted for it.

To close all. Let me beg of my Auditory, those of you especially who are most nearly concerned, to study, and exhibit to Mankind, that beautiful Character *Solomon* draws of the virtuous Woman in the last Chapter of the *Proverbs*, from the tenth Verse to the End, a Part of which stands directly opposed to the Vice I have been describing. *Verse 26, and 27. She openeth her Mouth with Wisdom: Is not Talkative, Cenforious or Peevish. If no Occasion of speaking offers, she keeps her Lips closed, and when she speaks it is both prudently and pertinently. And in her Tongue is the Law of Kindness: Every Thing she saith is courteous and obliging, as well as wise and prudent; and whilst 'tis visible that Love and Kindness dictates her*

^r Psal. xxxi, 20.

Discourse, this puts a commanding Force in it, and makes it a kind of Law to those she converseth with. *Verse 27. She looketh well to the Ways of her Household, and eateth not the Bread of Idleness.* Her own domestic Affairs fill up her Time and Care. She neither is Idle her self, nor indulges it in any of her Family. 'Tis with the highest Reason the wise Man pronounces of such a Woman, *That her Price is far above Rubies.* I profess my self so charmed with the Character *Solomon* here draws of the virtuous Woman, that I heartily wish all the Women in *Great Britain* would commit it to Memory, and copy it out in their daily Conduct.

And now, how Happy should I think my self, might any Thing I have offered be blessed of God, to put some Stó� to that uncharitable Spirit of Tale-bearing and Slander, which is gone forth among us; and I am sorry to say, discovers it self even among some of those who make a greater Profession than others. What Uneasiness hath it given me, to hear such Flirts as these from the Mouth of the Profane: There's such an one will neither Swear, Whore, nor Drink to excess, but for Tale-bearing and Slander hath scarce his equal: He is a common Makebate in the Neighbourhood.

Neighbourhood. What odd Notions some may have imbibed of Religion I know not, but sure I am, he or she that is a bad Neighbour, doth not, cannot deserve the Name of a good Christian. *'Tis impossible but that Offences will come, but woe to them by whom they come.* Let us all look to our selves, *That we lay not a stumbling Block in our Brother's way,* earnestly praying, That God would pour upon us more of that Wisdom from above, which is not only pure but peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of all good Works. Then we shall be so far from going up and down as Tale-bearers, that we shall do our utmost to frown upon, and discourage those who are such, and when any Thing of Scandal reaches our Ears, it will presently die with us. Then we shall be so far from standing against the Blood of our Neighbour, that we shall employ a laudable Solitude to clear up his Innocence in lesser Matters; much more, if the Crimes falsely charged on him are of a capital Nature.

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